

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: RESIGNATION AND SWEARING-IN

1. THE NIXON RESIGNATION AND PRESIDENT FORD'S ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE OVERWHELMINGLY DOMINATED HONG KONG MEDIA AUGUST 9 AND 10. ALL RADIO AND TV STATIONS DEVOTED MUCH AIR TIME TO THE DEVELOPMENT, WITH HKTVB (TELEVISION) PROVIDING ITS OWN LIVE SATELLITED RELAY OF THE RESIGNATION ADDRESS. RADIO HONG KONG RELAYED VOA'S CLEAR SIGNAL OF BOTH EVENTS. IN THE NEWSPAPERS COVERAGE WAS ALSO HEAVY, MOVING INTO TOP FRONTPAGE HEADLINES IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL LEFTIST WEN WEI PAO FOR THE THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE WATERGATE AFFAIR BROKE OUT. MANY CHINESE-LANGUAGE PAPERS, INCLUDING LEFTIST DAILIES, CARRIED USIS TRANSLATIONS OF THE RESIGNATION ADDRESS, MR. FORD'S REMARKS AND PROFILE.

2. FOLLOWING ARE SELECTIONS FROM A DELUGE OF EDITORIAL COMMENT:

3. WEN WEI PAO, DISMISSING PHONE TAPPING AS COMMON-PLACE IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND BUSINESS, EMPHASIZED: "THE WORLD'S CONCERN NOW IS WHETHER U.S. FOREIGN POLICY WILL CHANGE... IT APPEARS THERE WILL BE NO BASIC CHANGE.. BEFORE TAKING OFFICE FORD ISSUED A STATEMENT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR NIXON'S

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DIFFICULT SITUATION AND PLEDGED TO CONTINUE CARRYING OUT NIXON'S

FOREIGN POLICY. FOREIGN NEWS SERVICES' ANALYSES ALSO SEE NO SIGNIFICANT IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY; THEY INDICATE FORD WILL FIRST CONCENTRATE ON DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF INFLATION."

4. OTHER LEFTIST DAILIES COMMENTED SIMILARLY, WITH TA KUNG PAO EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER "WHAT NEW ACTS MAY COME FROM THE OTHER SUPERPOWER AS THE NEW TAKES OVER FROM THE OLD IN THE U.S."

5. MOST PRO-ROC PAPERS ALSO FORESAW NO MAJOR CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY, PARTICULARLY FOREIGN POLICY. TIN TIN YAT PAO SUPPORTED THIS VIEW BY SAYING, "BECAUSE OF AMERICA'S STRONG POINTS AS A BIG POWER, A CHANGE OF PRESIDENT WILL NOT 'TIP THE BALANCE.'" SING TAO JIH PAO ADDITIONALLY WELCOMED NIXON'S RESIGNATION WHICH THE PAPER SAID "AT LEAST GIVES OTHERS A CHANCE TO MEND THE SITUATION AND PUT NATIONAL AFFAIRS BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK." WAH KIU YAT PO PREDICTED PRESIDENT FORD WILL FOCUS MORE ON INFLATION AND OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS.

6. THE INDEPENDENT MING PAO REAFFIRMED NIXON'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD PEACE. THIS FOUND AGREEMENT IN SING PAO DAILY NEWS, ALSO INDEPENDENT. HOWEVER, SING PAO ADDED: "THE CHANGEOVER IN THE WHITE HOUSE SHOWS, ON THE ONE HAND, IT ALSO POINTS TO A WEAKNESS IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM -- THE PARTY'S INTEREST OVERRIDES THAT OF THE COUNTRY." PREDICTING NO MAJOR CHANGE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, SING PAO SAID "KISSINGER'S REMAINING AS SECRETARY OF STATE PARTICULARLY ENFORCES PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE."

7. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST COMMENTED: QUOTE...FOR THE WORLD, IT HAS BEEN A SAD AND ANXIOUS TIME WATCHING THE UNITED STATES WRESTLE WITH ITS AGONIES. IT WAS NOT ALL BAD, THOUGH, FOR THE TRIALS AMPLY PROVED THE WISDOM OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS AND THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THEY DEvised; IT HAS BEEN EXAMINED, TESTED AND FOUND TO BE IN SOUND WORKING ORDER9-

8. THIS PROVING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICA IS A COMFORTING BRIGHT SPOT THAT WILL OUTLIVE THE MEMORIES OF THE MORAL TURPITUDE THAT HAS COME TO BE LABELLED WATERAGE...

9. MR. FORD'S ADMINISTRATION, IF IT FOLLOWS THE STYLE OF THE MAN,
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WILL BE COMPETENT BUT DULL, A WELCOME CHANGE OF PACE FROM THE HIGH PRESSURE AND SECRECY OF HIS PREDECESSOR.

10. IT IS NOT IN THE NATURE OF THE MAN, NOR COULD IT BE EXPECTED THAT HE WOULD TRY ANY SPECTACULAR MOVES GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS ELEVATION FROM CONGRESSMAN TO PRESIDENT.

11. THIS MAY BE WHAT AMERICA NEEDS MOST -- A PERIOD OF CALM

WHEN THE OPEN WOUNDS OF THE LATTER NIXON YEARS CAN BE HEALED, SO
THE NATION CAN REGAIN ITS PRIDE AND PURPOSE. IT MUST BE HOPED THAT
THE WORLD CAN WAIT WITH PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THE
RESTORATION OF AMERICA'S SELF-RESPECT. UNQUOTE
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